

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MARCH 14, 2005

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2005–06 REGULAR SESSION

## ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 172

### Introduced by Assembly Member Chan

(Principal coauthor: Senator Escutia)

(Coauthors: Assembly Members Berg, Bermudez, Cohn, Coto, Evans, Hancock, Jones, Koretz, Leno, Lieber, Liu, Montanez, Mullin, Nava, Parra, Pavley, Ruskin, Salinas, and Yee)

(Coauthors: Senators Figueroa, Florez, Kuehl, Lowenthal, and Ortiz)

January 20, 2005

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An act to amend Section 8235 of the Education Code, relating to preschool.

#### LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 172, as amended, Chan. Universal preschool.

Existing law, the Child Care and Developmental Services Act, establishes various full- and part-time programs for a comprehensive, coordinated, and cost-effective system of developmental services for children to age 14 and their parents. Other existing law, the Kindergarten Readiness Pilot Program, permits, until January 1, 2011, school districts to participate in the program to provide kindergarten preparedness opportunities to increase a child's readiness for school. Existing law requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction to administer state preschool programs including part-time day and preschool appropriate programs for prekindergarten children 3 to 5 years of age.

This bill would make certain findings and state the intent of the Legislature with regard to universal preschool. *The bill would require the Superintendent of Public Instruction to report to the Legislature by*

*January 1, 2007, on state preschool programs, with certain requirements.*

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: ~~no~~-yes.  
State-mandated local program: no.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

- 1 SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the
- 2 following:
- 3 (a) A compelling body of respected research demonstrates that
- 4 quality preschool programs benefit children and their families,
- 5 the public school system, public safety, the economy, and society
- 6 as a whole.
- 7 (b) California has an enormous opportunity to reach children
- 8 at a time when they are eager and ready to learn. 90 percent of
- 9 brain development takes place before age five, making early
- 10 childhood the best time to invest in preschool programs that
- 11 boost learning, creativity, and social skills. Preschool programs
- 12 lay a strong foundation that helps children succeed in school and
- 13 in life.
- 14 (c) Quality preschool experiences boost academic achievement
- 15 in school, decrease grade retention, decrease special education
- 16 placements, and increase graduation rates. Quality preschool
- 17 further reduces the likelihood of later arrest and incarceration,
- 18 and increases college attendance and earnings in adulthood.
- 19 Economists report that every dollar invested in quality preschool
- 20 returns as much as seven dollars (\$7) to the public.
- 21 (d) Hundreds of thousands of children in this state do not have
- 22 access to quality preschool. Preschool age children enroll at a
- 23 rate of just 47 percent below the national average and far below
- 24 international comparisons.
- 25 (e) The fastest growing segment of the preschool age
- 26 population is the most underenrolled, in that Latino children
- 27 account for nearly half of all preschool age children, yet have the
- 28 lowest enrollment rate of any ethnic group, just 37 percent.
- 29 (f) Of the estimated 1.1 million children who are three to five
- 30 years old and not yet enrolled in kindergarten, about 39 percent
- 31 would likely be designated as English language learners.
- 32 Therefore, pathways to excellence must be created for all

1 children while communicating respect and support for  
2 differences in cultural origins.

3 (g) Quality preschool experiences decrease special education  
4 placements, in part because they have the potential to provide  
5 early identification and intervention for young children with  
6 exceptional needs, which can reduce the need for ongoing special  
7 education services. Providing access to quality preschool for  
8 children with exceptional needs can help support their  
9 development and prepare them for a successful transition to  
10 kindergarten and beyond.

11 (h) Research confirms the many benefits that children, parents,  
12 and preschool programs gain when parents are involved in their  
13 child's preschool learning both inside the classroom and at home.

14 (i) Universal programs - those available to all families - are  
15 supported by research. Research shows that children from all  
16 backgrounds benefit from quality preschool. The school and life  
17 success of low-income and at-risk children may be significantly  
18 increased through quality preschool. But problems with school  
19 readiness are not confined to low-income children and neither are  
20 the benefits of preschool. A 2004 University of California study  
21 of California kindergartners found that children from all income  
22 backgrounds who attended preschool showed significant  
23 prereading and premath gains over children who did not attend  
24 preschool.

25 (j) Low- and middle-income California families have low  
26 preschool enrollment rates. Private preschool may be  
27 prohibitively expensive, with quality programs in some  
28 communities costing twice as much per year as tuition to the  
29 California State University system.

30 (k) The Council of Chief State School Officers has found that  
31 efforts to reform and strengthen public education cannot succeed  
32 without a concerted effort to support and improve programs that  
33 provide care and education for our youngest children.

34 (l) All California families should have access to quality  
35 preschool programs for their children.

36 (m) These ideas are supported by many of the findings and  
37 recommendations of the National Education Goals Panel, the  
38 2000 California Master Plan for Education, and the 1998  
39 Universal Preschool Task Force.

1 SEC. 2. Therefore, it is the intent of the Legislature to  
2 establish and provide a voluntary preschool-for-all system that  
3 conforms to the following principles:

4 (a) Programs may be offered in a variety of settings including  
5 public schools, centers, family child care homes, faith-based  
6 institutions, and head start programs. These programs will meet  
7 research-based standards for social, emotional, cognitive,  
8 linguistic, and physical development, and are linked to public  
9 school system standards.

10 (b) A goal will be set for preschool teachers to be educated  
11 and compensated at levels comparable to teachers in the public  
12 school system and early education professionals will have access  
13 to ongoing professional development.

14 (c) Recognizing that parents are their children's first teachers,  
15 and that preschool programs benefit from engaged parents,  
16 programs will create opportunities for parent involvement in  
17 preschool settings, as well as for interaction between parents and  
18 preschool teachers and administrators. Quality preschools can  
19 become learning resources not only for children but for their  
20 parents as well.

21 (d) Families will have access to programs with settings,  
22 locations, hours, and participatory opportunities that meet their  
23 needs and preferences, and that support their aspirations for their  
24 children. For working families, part-time preschool will be  
25 integrated with full-time daycare as seamlessly as possible.

26 (e) Children of all cultural, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds,  
27 income levels, and neighborhoods will be welcomed in inclusive  
28 programs designed to meet their needs.

29 (f) Elements that promote the inclusion of children with  
30 exceptional needs will be integrated into the planning and design  
31 of programs, facilities, staff training programs, and the provision  
32 of resources for parents.

33 (g) A system of public accountability will be established at  
34 state and local levels to ensure maximum benefits for children,  
35 equal access to services, proper use of tax dollars, and  
36 transparency to the public.

37 (h) Programs will meet established standards of the public  
38 school system, providing adequate pay and benefits for qualified  
39 teachers, establishing accessible higher education opportunities  
40 for the preparation of the workforce, developing suitable

1 preschool facilities, and engaging in ongoing quality  
2 assessments. Financing of preschool should not detract from  
3 funding for infants, toddlers, and schoolage children, nor child  
4 care subsidies that enable low-income families to work.

5 (i) A preschool-for-all system will connect coherently with the  
6 public education system as well as to programs serving infants  
7 and toddlers and those providing full-time, full-time year-round  
8 child care and other services for children of all ages. In addition,  
9 the preschool-for-all system will connect families to other  
10 services, including health and nutrition resources, that support  
11 children's readiness to learn.

12 (j) All children deserve the opportunity to get ready to do their  
13 best in school, and to succeed later in life. Quality preschool  
14 helps build a learning foundation that should be available to all  
15 families who want it for their children. The Legislature  
16 recognizes the benefits of quality preschool, and that the public  
17 education system, the economy, and quality of life will be  
18 strengthened by providing quality preschool for all children.

19 *SEC. 3. Section 8235 of the Education Code is amended to*  
20 *read:*

21 8235. (a) The Superintendent of ~~Public Instruction~~ shall  
22 administer all state preschool programs in accordance with the  
23 funding priorities set forth in Section 8236. Those programs shall  
24 include, but not be limited to, part-day and preschool appropriate  
25 programs for prekindergarten children three to five years of age  
26 in educational development, health services, social services,  
27 nutritional services, parent education and parent participation,  
28 evaluation, and staff development. Preschool programs for which  
29 federal reimbursement is not available shall be funded as  
30 prescribed by the Legislature in the Budget Act, and unless  
31 otherwise specified by the Legislature, shall not utilize federal  
32 funds made available through Title XX of the Social Security Act  
33 (42 U.S.C. Sec. 1397).

34 (b) Federal Headstart funds used to provide services to  
35 families receiving state preschool services ~~shall be deemed~~ *are*  
36 nonrestricted funds.

37 (c) Priority for receiving state preschool services shall be  
38 given to low-income families who meet the eligibility standards  
39 as established by the Superintendent of ~~Public Instruction~~, in  
40 accordance with the priorities set forth in Section 8236.

1 (d) Reimbursement for state preschool programs shall be on a  
2 per capita basis, as determined by the Superintendent of Public  
3 Instruction.

4 (e) Any agency described in subdivision (c) of Section 8208 as  
5 an “applicant or contracting agency” is eligible to contract to  
6 operate a state preschool program.

7 *(f) The Superintendent shall prepare a report regarding the*  
8 *types of preschool programs that receive funding pursuant to this*  
9 *article. This report shall include, but not be limited to, data*  
10 *relating to the geographic and income distribution of*  
11 *participants in these programs. The Superintendent shall submit*  
12 *this report to the Legislature on or before January 1, 2007.*